

# A Message from the President...

BY: ROB DINTRUFF

January 15th of this new year left much to be desired. The usual news reports of conflict and national disasters made headlines. Tik Tok was in peril. Weather reports focused on another polar vortex affecting the lower 48 states. In Keuka Park, the temperature had been below freezing for a couple of days and dipped into the low double digits overnight.

I awoke that morning and after stoking the coals in the wood stove, to supplement an inadequate heat pump, I went to the kitchen and turned on the water. Nothing came out of the tap. Fortunately, a hair dryer applied to the suspected frozen pipe and some additional insulation solved the problem and by early afternoon I was hiking with the dog in the snow-covered woods behind the house.

I'm sure many readers can relate to the summer cottage built in the 1960s that was converted to a year-round residence by an earlier generation. The opportunities for winter repairs and preparations for the summer are abundant.

I came away from this day with three thoughts. First, an appreciation for that generation that found Keuka Lake and put down some roots in that summer getaway that lacked insulation. Second, a reminder of how beautiful Keuka Lake can be in the winter looking down at the water through the trees while hiking with the dog on Bluff Point. Other than frozen water pipes, 12° temperatures and the lure of Tik Tok, it's hard to understand why more people aren't here in the winter. And finally, I realized how much I take for granted the ease with which I can access that sparkling pure Keuka Lake water, cool and clear as it comes out of the tap and into my glass. Though anecdotal, it appears that there may be a clear longevity benefit to Keuka Lake water. Just ask Jane Pearson. "Who is Jane?" you ask. Keep reading...

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# **An Interview with Jane Pearson**



### 100 Years of Life at Keuka Lake

Occasionally, we are all asked for our birthdate in the form MM/DD/YYYY. On January 6th of 2025, I met Jane Pearson, one of the reasons why it is important for us to express the year with four digits. Though born on 9/30/21, she is certainly not three years old.

Most people reading this can only imagine what life was like at Keuka Lake 100 years ago. Jane can discuss it. Picture a time in the 1920s when your home may have had a phone, but didn't have a refrigerator or even electricity. Your well water was delivered by a hand operated pump. Jane witnessed changes to this and much more in her 103 years (so far) at Keuka Lake.

In her early years, the lakeshore was minimally developed and summer homes were mostly small cottages. Steamboats that provided transport along the shoreline were being replaced by cars, but Jane recalls riding the trolley that ran from Branchport to Penn Yan before it ceased operation in 1927.

Jane's parents and grandparents also grew up in the area but her roots take her back further to her great grandfather, Dr. J. C. Wightman who, in the 1800s, built the stone house that still stands at the south edge of Branchport, along the lake.

As a child, Jane attended primary school at the Stone Schoolhouse, now offices for the Town of Jerusalem. She recalls summers when she and her cousin took the rowboat out to catch fish that they would clean and cook over a fire they built along the opposite shore. At night, fishing boats with propane-fueled lights, attracted minnows to the surface and lit up the whole northern end of the lake. In later years she learned to waterski and spent time sailing with her brother on his A Scow and the smaller but faster E Scow. Sugar Creek provided a place to catch turtles and explore the habitat.

Keuka's water level was not well controlled (as it is today) and Jane remembers a time, probably the flood of 1935, paddling a boat over the decks of cottages on Campbell's Beach which is now Camp Good Days.

Winters were often harsh and the long-forgotten act of ice harvesting took place each winter in Branchport at the basin south of town. Large blocks of ice, insulated with saw dust, were stored at the ice house and utilized through the summer for the ice boxes of residents before refrigeration became widely available. As the ice broke up in the spring it was also time to tap the sugar maple trees to make syrup.





After attending Penn Yan Academy and Keuka College, Jane took a job with IBM in Rochester, but like so many nearby grape vines, her roots had been firmly planted at Keuka Lake. In 1948, as a single young woman, she took earnings from her job at IBM and bought a parcel of land along the lake. That purchase made her roots grow deeper as she later married, had four children and built a summer home on the property. She and her husband Bill, never wanted to leave and at the age of 103, she still spends her summers in that home and drinks Keuka Lake water.

But this story doesn't end there. Jane's daughter Ann, and husband Rob, live across the lake on West Bluff Drive. Occasionally, above the pristine waters of the lake, a red, white and blue seaplane flown by Jane's grandson, points to yet another generation for which the lake feels like home. All because of Jane.

Jane could never remember a time when Keuka Lake water was undrinkable. To some degree, it resides in every cell of her body and has sustained her for more than a century. When asked if it was perhaps possible that Keuka Lake water gets credit for her longevity, her immediate response was crisp and to the point: "Didn't hurt. That's for sure!"



Dr. J.C. Whightman in front of his stone house in Branchport.



Jane, shown with her brother, Monroe Evans, circa 1925

We think Jane may be the person who has been continuously connected to Keuka Lake longer than anyone. If you know of someone on Keuka Lake that has passed the century mark, please let us know. We'd enjoy hearing their story at info@keukalakeassociation.org



The seaplane now piloted by Jane's grandson.







March 20th marks the first day of Spring and we will soon be turning our attention to preparing our properties for outdoor activities. The Keuka Lake Association is an active participant of the Lake Friendly Living Coalition of the Finger Lakes. In the month of May, we will celebrate Lake Friendly Living with other Finger Lakes Associations by publishing our Lake Friendly Living Guide, which will include many tangible ideas for protecting the lake and what it means to take the LFL Pledge. Until then, here are a few things to keep in mind this Spring, as you dream of the Summer days ahead.

During the next rainstorm, observe the surface runoff on your property. Is there direct runoff from your house, driveway or lawn into the lake or a nearby stream? Direct runoff and erosion from these surfaces can carry unwanted and excessive sediment, nutrients or toxic pollutants to the lake. Proper landscaping, drainage and chemical use around the home can greatly reduce the risk of contaminated runoff during heavy rainstorms. Planting generous amounts of trees, shrubs and ground cover encourages excess rainwater to filter slowly into the soil instead of flowing directly into storm drains or nearby streams. It may be necessary to improve drainage around a home to minimize runoff during storms.



How do you transition lawns into functioning landscape systems that mimic nature and are attractive vs the no-mow wild concept? If one goal is to reduce lawns, the easiest way is to just stop mowing but it is important to keep property values with a planned and maintained landscape. Gardens with diverse plants are attractive all year round. Inviting birds and butterflies helps to create experiences in addition to water attraction of activities. Planting with native plants in the style of a cottage garden requires less maintenance than mowing.

Start with a small area and choose a spot that will have an impact in reducing the flow of rainwater. Study the path of water running from your roof or driveway and create a garden to intercept and absorb the water. This is a rain garden. It isn't that complicated and does not have to be attached to the gutter flow, but it is an option. Another placement is simply where water may pool up and doesn't drain. The goal is to create an attractive garden that does not require continuous fertilizing and irrigation. Less mowing will also reduce your carbon footprint and noise pollution.

See some examples on the next page and start planning your dream gardens now!



"Every home is waterfront property. How? Everyone lives in a watershed and all landscaping activities affect our environmental health."

-Laurie Broccolo



Rain garden intercepts roof runoff before driveway





Rain Garden native plants, echinacea, monarda, black eye susan, iris and packera with non-native pollinator plants such as daisies and ajuga.

Plant with a purpose. The best plant choices are aggressive natives because they are hardy and sturdy against ice and storm surges, all while requiring minimal soil and maintenance. These are usually species people see as weeds, but they are the plants that make valuable contributions to waterfront property and wildlife. Take swamp milkweed, for example. Swamp milkweed is a shrubby, herbaceous plant great for erosion control and one of only three host plants for monarch butterflies. Red twig dogwood thrives with wet feet. Its branches grow along the ground sending out roots that further stabilize the soil. Think of these guidelines not as a burden but rather a plan that will protect your investment and enjoyment of your waterfront property for years to come. When it comes to the environment, everyone lives on the water and each seemingly insignificant effort can add up to something wonderful.

Laurie Broccolo is a consultant with over 40 years' experience and (LEEDS) in Landscaping with Environmental Expertise and Design Services. As a committed Trustee to the Saunders Finger Lakes Museum, she is part of the initiative to educate and demonstrate ways to inspire appreciation and protection of our natural ecology.



# Remembering Bill Oben

# A former KLA President who, of course, loved Keuka Lake

The rounded rocks that make up the fireplace that Bill Oben built in his living room are evidence of the glacial era that created Keuka Lake. Bill loved Keuka Lake and sought to preserve its natural beauty. Bill also loved boats. Above that living room fireplace is a beautiful canoe inverted and hanging from the ceiling. As the story goes, Bill and others enrolled at the Wooden Boat School in Brooklin Maine, crafted the canoe and, upon completion, held a drawing to determine who would take it home. Bill was lucky in many other ways as well. He had the good fortune to be connected with Keuka Lake for much of his life.

Bill was born in Michigan and just six years old when his father passed away. A few years later, a chance visit to see some former neighbors that had recently been relocated from Michigan to Corning NY, somehow coaxed Bill's mother to bring him and his younger sister to the Corning area. As a high school student, Bill and a friend went on fishing trips in the Finger Lakes. Years later, and after earning an engineering degree from Purdue, Bill worked at DuPont and later at Kodak in Rochester. At the time of the flood in June of 1972, Bill bought a parcel of land and slowly but deliberately built a home where extended family would gather for their summer visits and keep cool while enjoying a meal overlooking Keuka Lake. For much of the last thirty years of his life, it was home for Bill and his wife Beverly.



Picturing Bill's retirement tells his story best, revealing his character and numerous contributions.



The Keuka Lake Association owes a debt of gratitude to Bill Oben for his service as a Board Member and KLA President from 2002-2006. The Finger Lakes Boating Museum is another organization where Bill was a significant contributor. Passionate about history and boating, he was a principle founder of the museum, helping to build it into what it is today and providing it with his counsel right to the end of his life.

Now picture a yellow antique Model A, stopped at a viewpoint where the picture Bill took would later become a painting signed by Beverly. Or envision Bill working in his shop to restore a Chris Craft boat or a Ben Reno Trout Boat, his pride and joy.

On any given morning, when conditions were favorable, Bill could be seen rowing along the shore of the Bluff at 5:30 am. One can imagine the equanimity he felt as the first and only boat on the lake each day.

Finally, imagine "Bill the author" completing a manuscript for one of three books he wrote about boats and the people and companies that manufactured them. He sought diligently to preserve boating history in a way that few others ever would. Bill is now, and will forever be, a key part of that history.

# Lake Level Update NOLAN SMITH, LAKE LEVEL COMMITTEE

The lake level has been maintained within its target range. KLOC and the Village of Penn Yan agree to continue the management plan devised in 2023 and used in 2024, where the gates will be managed such that the lake level stays in the lower part of the target zone until the snowpack and ice have receded, at which point, they will target the middle of the range.

As reported on our website and in the January e-News, the water temperature shown on the KLA Water Temperature chart is in error, possibly showing values up to 9 degrees lower than reality. The current water temperature below the ice in Penn Yan, about 20 ft. down, near the bottom (where our sensor reads), should be about 39 degrees F. The sensor belongs to the Penn Yan Village, who has been alerted with the request to re-calibrate. We hope this to be corrected in the near future. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

### NOW IS THE TIME TO TAKE BOATING SAFETY COURSE!!

In 2025, all motor boat operators regardless of age will need a boating safety certificate.

**Saunders Finger Lakes Museum** is hosting in-person classes on select Sundays from March to September. Please see their website to sign up!

**Other approved courses** include those offered by: <u>NYS Parks and Recreation Dept,</u> the US Coast Guard Auxiliary, the US Power Squadrons, or US Powerboating.





# Save the Dates



July 14th- Golf Tournament at Lakeside Country Club July 19th- Annual Meeting at Keuka College August 13th- Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours

### **NEW MEMBERS**

Somebody's Business LLC
Lovals Holdings LLC
Nickolas Optis
Riley Helmuth
Gary Smith
Penelope Stone
David Yattaw
Tom & Ginny Coon



# A Modest Transformation Is Underway

ROB DINTRUFF, PRESIDENT

Simple adjustments to how we operate will drive our success in the years to come.

The Keuka Lake Association is a vibrant organization with a vital mission to preserve and protect Keuka Lake. As we carry that mission forward into 2025 we are focused on four strategies:

- 1. **Broader membership** is a key objective for this year. We must engage and serve the Keuka Lake Watershed, not just Keuka Lake. We will retain and grow our membership base, involve them, and demonstrate the value that we provide.
- 2. **Innovation that is data-driven** will influence key decisions and make the KLA more efficient. Two examples illustrate our intent:
  - Water testing for nutrients and bacteria will intensify when we find levels that are unacceptable and search for their source. Testing sites that consistently yield acceptable levels of contaminants will be sampled less frequently and allow us to redirect resources to the testing of streams that flow into the lake.
  - Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) are driven by a combination of many factors. Quantifying and understanding these factors and improving the process by which we find and report HABs will inform our ambition to reduce them and limit their impact.
- 3. **Creating a strong culture** with a shared purpose is essential to our mission. The KLA must strengthen relationships with like-minded organizations that help protect the lake. Our KLA Board is unified and goal-driven to achieve this.
- 4. **Making the KLA more visible to our constituents**, other related organizations and the townships and municipalities that surround the lake will help deliver the cooperation and commitment necessary to get results.

Our membership and the KLA Board share a deep commitment to the preservation and protection of Keuka Lake. We remain laser-focused on our mission and will execute against strategic priorities that support it. Fortunately, our KLA Board has the benefit of diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives and is flexible and cooperative. That level of alignment is rare, but invaluable.

I am sincerely proud of what the KLA has accomplished and how it has positioned itself for long-term success. With the help of all who read this, the KLA will grow, gain efficiency and succeed in preserving and protecting Keuka Lake for future generations.

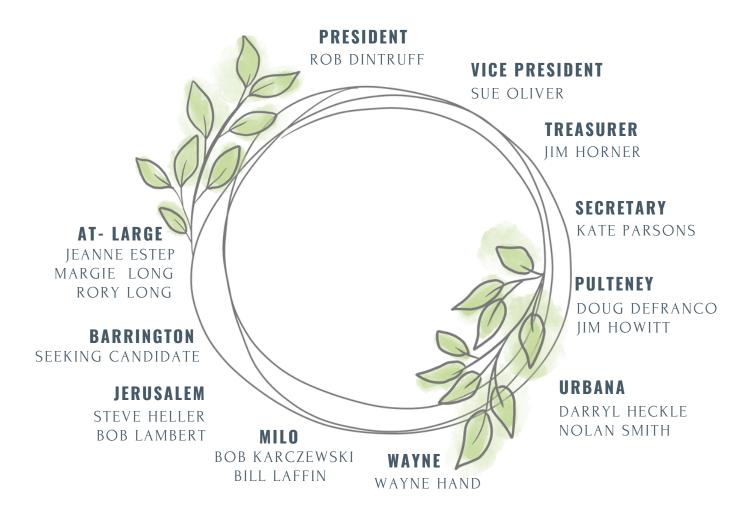
"To preserve and protect Keuka Lake and its natural beauty for future generations"







# KLA DIRECTORS & OFFICERS



Please join us in welcoming Margie Long!

The KLA is always looking for individuals who share our passion for protecting the lake! Email resumes to info@keukalakeassociation.org.



THE KLA OFFICE IS LOCATED AT: 2466 NY-54A, SUITE 207, PENN YAN, NY

Open hours fluctuate, so please make arrangments ahead of time if you'd like to stop by!

# CRITTER CORNER

### THE CANADA GEESE



Courtesy of the NYSDEC

Few people realize that there are distinct populations of Canada geese in New York. Wildlife managers often refer to geese that breed in Northern Canada and winter in the U.S. as migratory. These are the honking harbingers of the changing seasons, as waves of high flying geese pass over during spring and fall migration. Geese that breed in Southern Canada and the U.S. are referred to as residents because they spend most of their lives in one area. Banding studies have shown that resident Canada geese are not simply migrant geese that stopped migrating.

### **Life History**

Resident geese are long-lived, upwards of 20 years or more. Most resident geese begin breeding when they are 2-3 years old and they nest every year for the rest of their lives. Pairs mate for life, but if one member dies, the remaining goose will mate again. Geese lay an average of 5-6 eggs per nest, about half of which will hatch and become free-flying birds in the fall. A single female goose may produce more than 50 young over her lifetime.

The annual life cycle for resident geese begins in late winter when adult pairs return to nesting areas in late February or March, as soon as waters open up. Egg-laying (1-2 weeks) and incubation (about 4 weeks) generally extend through April, with the peak of hatching in late April or early May. Geese will aggressively defend their nests and may attack if approached. Non-breeding geese often remain nearby in feeding flocks during the nesting season. After hatching, goose families may move considerable distances from nesting areas to brood-rearing areas, appearing suddenly at ponds bordered by lawns.

After nesting, geese undergo an annual molt, a 4-5 week flightless period when they shed and regrow their outer wing feathers. Molting occurs between mid-June and late July, and the birds resume flight by August. During the molt, geese congregate at ponds or lakes that provide a safe place to rest, feed, and escape danger. Through the fall, geese gradually increase the distance of their feeding flights. During this time, they are more likely to be found away from water until ice or snow eliminates feeding areas. At this time, the geese are forced to nearby open water areas or south, where they remain until milder weather returns and nesting areas open up.

### **Distribution and Habitat**

Migratory populations of Canada geese have existed for as long as we know, while the resident population is a recent phenomenon. In the early 1900s, only a handful of Canada geese nested in New York State. These geese were descendants of captive birds released by private individuals in the Lower Hudson Valley and on Long Island. Local flocks grew rapidly and spread to other areas. During the 1950s and 1960s, game farm geese were released by the State Conservation Department on Wildlife Management Areas in upstate New York (north and west of Albany) to establish local flocks in huntable areas.



Today, New York's resident Canada goose population numbers are close to 200,000 birds, with nesting documented all across the state. Combined with populations nesting in other eastern states, there are more than one million year-round resident geese in the Atlantic Flyway. Every fall, these are joined by similar numbers of migratory geese from Northern Canada. Resident populations have grown steadily because of milder, more favorable conditions for nesting and survival. Migratory populations, on the other hand, have experienced some dramatic ups and downs caused by harsh weather on breeding grounds and greater exposure to harvest by hunters.

### **Status**

All Canada geese, including resident flocks, are protected by Federal and State laws and regulations. In New York, management responsibility for Canada geese is shared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the DEC. It is illegal to hunt, kill, sell, purchase, or possess migratory birds or their parts (feathers, nests, eggs, etc.) except as permitted by regulations adopted by USFWS and DEC.

### **Management and Research Needs**

Canada geese are one of the most familiar wildlife species in New York State. These birds are important for the recreational opportunities they provide and because of problems they can cause. Balancing these two views of Canada geese is a tremendous challenge for wildlife managers, property owners, and communities across the state.



\*\*\*For more information regarding the health of wildlife or the recent concerns related to Avian Flu, please refer to to NYSDEC website:

https://dec.ny.gov/nature/wildlife-health/animal-diseases

# 2025 ALEXANDER & ESTHER WAHLIG KEUKA LAKE WATERSHED SCHOLARSHIP



The goal of this scholarship, coordinated by the Keuka Lake Association, is to assist a graduating senior high school student who is planning to enroll in a four year program (may include a two year college with plans to transfer to a four year institution) and who is planning on pursuing a career in general environmental sciences or limnology or water quality/watershed management.

Eligible applicants include senior students graduating from high schools in the Keuka Lake Watershed, including Haverling Central School, Dundee Central School, Penn Yan Academy, Prattsburgh Central School, Hammondsport Central School or senior students whose parents are Keuka Lake Association members.

The one-time \$1000 scholarship will be awarded in one installment upon satisfactory completion of the first semester and submission of a transcript sent to the Keuka Lake Association office for review by the committee. The selection committee is composed of five members appointed by the Keuka Lake Association and will meet in April of the student's graduating year. The committee must receive application forms by April fifteenth of the graduating year. By June first the committee will send the selected recipient(s) a letter and forward a copy to the guidance department of the appropriate school.

Students should submit an application for the scholarship to the Keuka Lake Association by April 15, 2024 by mail (PO Box 35, Penn Yan, NY 14527) or electronically to info@keukalakeassociation.org. The application must include a letter of recommendation from one of the applicant's teachers and a 250 to 300 word essay describing the student's interest in his or her selected field of study and how the student plans to apply that knowledge either in a future career or for enriching

his/her appreciation in the environmental sciences or water quality/watershed management.

Last Name, First Name, M.I				
Address				
Phone	E-mail Address			
Planned Major	College or University	High School Average		



### KLA MEMBER APPLICATION



Yes, I want to support the Keuka Lake Association!

New Renew	val
NAME(S)	
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E-MAIL ADDRESS 2	APRIL MEMBER DUES DUE
SECONDARY ADDRESS	JUNE LAST NEWSLETTER FOR THOSE
CITY, STATE, ZIP	WILD HAVE NOT DENEWED
KEUKA PHONE	
Dates I wish to receive mailings at KEUKA address	s: From/ thru/ (month/day)
Would you like to receive E-Announcements and o	our monthly E-Newsletters? Yes/No
How would you like to receive our Quarterly Printe	d Newsletter? Mail/E-mail/Both
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Thank you for your support!





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Keuka Lake Land & Realty
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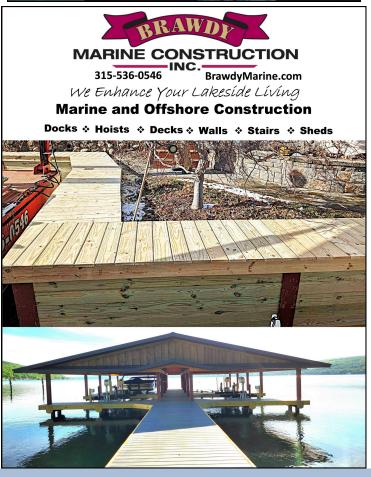
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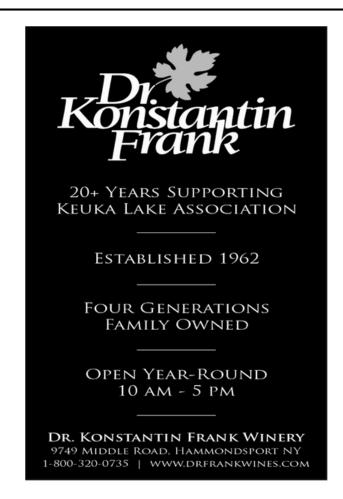


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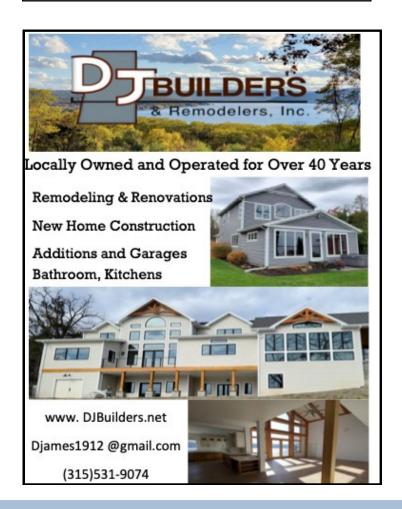
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Our mission is to preserve and protect Kenka Lake and its natural beauty for future generations.



